Global Deployment of Reserve Soldiers: A Leadership Challenge

Major Wendy McKenzie, RN, BSN, MSN(c), CNN(C)
Deputy Commanding Officer
and

Captain The Reverend Isabel Healy-Morrow, BSW. MDiv
Regimental Chaplain
The Rocky Mountain Rangers
Canadian Forces Reserves
PO Box 3250
Kamloops, BC V2C 6B8
CANADA

ABSTRACT

In both the corporate world and in the armed forces, many theories have been developed to explain the relationship between leadership and team effectiveness. These theories provide the foundation which ensures successful integration of both employees and soldiers into business or military organizational cultures. In both cases, variables such as leadership style, business and mission requirements, coupled with time constraints, are all major factors in operational success. However, what happens when the civilian who becomes a part time soldier is employed in a strictly military environment? Is there an overlap in organizational cultures, or does military leadership need to provide special attention for these unique soldiers? The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how a deeper understanding of the overlap between civilian and military organizational culture can improve the psychological preparedness of Reserve Force soldiers who are mobilized for full-time military operations.

RELEVANCY TO THE SYMPOSIUM

Understanding the opposing values which are contained within corporate and military sub-cultures and the subsequent resulting psychological stress which is then created for reserve military personnel is critical for effective leadership. These Reserve personnel, who are members of the military and operate as part of a Regular Force team, have strong psychological ties with their civilian employers and are often caught in a flow of internal mental and moral dilemmas in times of decision-making. Understanding the stressors placed on individuals who find themselves attempting to operate simultaneously in both systems can assist in creating strategies for developing more effective leadership as well as individual and family resiliency.

Effective leadership thus needs to take into account the tensions which have been created between the diametrically opposing rules and expectations of the civilian working environment and the military working environment, and how this tension affects participants in operational deployments.

Report Documentation Page		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE **01 APR 2006**	2. REPORT TYPE **N/A**	3. DATES COVERED **-**	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Global Deployment of Reserve Soldiers: A Leadership Challenge**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
		5b. GRANT NUMBER	
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
		5e. TASK NUMBER	
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **Regimental Chaplain The Rocky Mountain Rangers Canadian Forces Reserves PO Box 3250 Kamloops, BC V2C 6B8 CANADA**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT **Approved for public release, distribution unlimited**			
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES **See also ADM001955.**			
14. ABSTRACT			
15. SUBJECT TERMS			

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT **UU**	18. NUMBER OF PAGES **8**	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**			

RATIONALE

Few, if any, military training systems take into account the values and ethics that individual members bring with them which have been superimposed by outside agencies, especially their civilian employers. As well, little attention during training is given to the diversity of individual ethical, societal, or religious values held by combatants or their impact on psychological preparedness for warfare and/or peace-keeping missions.

Self concept is based on personal values and enables individuals to formulate a framework for their personal way of being for moral and ethical decision making such as distinguishing right from wrong. (Gaudine & Beaton, 2002; Roberts, Spreitzer, Dutton, Quinn, & Barker, 2005; Rokeach, 1968; Ustal, 1978) These "personal values may conflict with the values of professional associations and employing organizations" and therefore "result in ethical conflict" for the individual.(Gaudine & Beaton, 2002). Reserve soldiers may feel torn between conflicting loyalties to their employer and their regiment, which can lead to personal issues as well as retention problems for both the military and corporate systems. (Dobreva-Martinova et al, 2001). Understanding these conflicts and building on the assets of the reserve soldier is a leadership challenge which, if successfully met, could profit all sectors - military, corporate and family alike.

Seen as a unique resource for military commanders at a time of increasing global need for military support, the Reserve soldier has hidden assets that are only now beginning to be realized. Reserve Force soldiers are being deployed more often and for longer periods of time more than ever before in history. As a part time military employee, the reserve soldier has many priorities to cope with prior to deployment including, (but not limited to) a leave of absence from full time civilian employment, delay of educational commitments, and organization of family needs and supports, in addition to mental and physical preparation for combat military service.

There is obviously strong potential for conflict to develop. The personal ability to manage potential conflicting priorities is formulated from learned coping skills developed over a lifetime of education and practice within corporate employment cultures. Effective military leadership thus needs to recognize potential tensions created between opposing rules and expectations of the civilian working environment and the military working environment, and how this may affect participants in full time operational deployments. This paper will demonstrate how a deeper understanding of the overlap between civilian and military organizational culture can improve the psychological preparedness of Reserve Force soldiers who are mobilized for full-time military operations.

EDUCATIONAL CULTURE

A Reserve soldier in Canada is between 18-60 years of age. They join the military for many reasons: to serve their country, to fulfill a need to be involved in the "global solution", to satisfy a need for adventure, to balance corporate stress so as to avoid burnout, or they may simply possess "the Warrior Spirit" and seek an opportunity to express it (Grossman). It is also not uncommon to have professionals such as physicians, nurses, lawyers, or social workers who serve as Reservists. They discover that achieving balance in life can be achieved through reserve service. This corporate interlude enables them to remain productive to do "something different" yet at the same time enables development of their civilian skill sets in a military environment.(Etzon et al, 1998)

Chronological age and educational differences can vary widely between reserve soldiers and can range from recent high school graduates to professionals such as nurses, physicians and psychologists. Indoctrinating such a wide range of students simultaneously is difficult. University educators have noticed distinct challenges

when presented with multi generational classrooms and have been able to delineate and associate distinct characteristics with different age groups. These cohort groups have been labeled as Millennials, Generation X'ers and Baby Boomers based on age and common characteristics.(Debard, 2004; Walker, 2002) For the purposes of this discussion paper, the primary focus will be the 18-25 year old millennial who is usually at the threshold of their working career or still within the university education system.

Educators have identified this cohort as "millennial students", as they have unique characteristics that are not common among other age groups. These students are the "vanguard of the technological evolution" and see themselves as special. (Debard, 2004; Walker, 2002). They have grown up with technology and are not afraid to use it. They learn quickly, are team orientated and able to critically think while under stress. "They are ambitious and often have unrealistic career goals."(Walker, 2002). While they have lived and worked with rules and standards within their home and work environment, they view them as a guide and not an absolute. They are often single, or perhaps have a partner and may have started their own nuclear family. The millennial student is the foundation for the formation of the millennial soldier.

Leadership of the millennial soldier can indeed be challenging. Military training is often not conducive to connecting intellectually with this level of novice soldier. Historically, training was developed nationally to be inclusive, to maintain standards and to appeal to the greatest number of students by focusing classroom instruction towards the educational level of the majority of the soldiers. This provided the greatest opportunity for success to the bulk of the class and was economical as it utilized the engagement of mass educational techniques with individual support to a limited number of participants. This inflexible educational system has the potential to be a barrier to learning for the reserve millennial soldier as it fails to take into account the soldier's often extensive post-secondary educational credentials.

Today's millennial soldier is often engaged in the quest to further their university education and is therefore in "learning mode". To teach them using inflexible dated techniques quickly results in student boredom and will cause retention issues. As collective training time is extremely valuable and often difficult to achieve, teaching students over long and sometimes sporadic time periods is ineffective. Educational time is better utilized with collective team building and group training. Therefore, effective teaching strategies would include targeting familiar educational and technological techniques, such as distance education, WEB CT or internet learning that will in turn allow valuable group time to be used for hands on collective training.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Corporate Organizational Culture is defined as the "espoused values and credo of the organization" (Schein, 2004). Used as a buzz word since the 1930's, corporate culture is considered an essential concept as it provides a qualitative measurement tool from which to gauge economic success, leadership and management practices in the corporate world. Many authors, when referring to organizational culture, also refer to organizational climate. "Climate" is a description of the organizational culture given by an observer from either an emic or etic perspective and ignores personal feelings; thus it is reflective of job satisfaction. An affective response to one's employment with regards to rules and norms, behavior, supervisory practices, and promotion opportunities is a measurement of job satisfaction.

An example of corporate culture is WalMart. A successful American retail business since its inception in 1962, WalMart employs 1.8 million people in 6,100 stores located across 15 different countries. WalMart's corporate culture rests on a three-pronged philosophy which is foundational to their leadership policies. Its expression is simple and can be readily remembered by employees:

(a.) Respect for the individual;
(b.) Service to the customer; and
(c.) Strive for excellence.

Respect for the individual includes respect for oneself, one's supervisor, one's fellow employees, and customers. This is expressed by a positive, cheerful attitude on the job; by treating others as one would wish to be treated oneself, and by demonstrating respect for all persons, irrespective of gender, age, racial minority, or educational level. This concept of respect is easily transferred to a military environment, where respect for superiors, peers, and subordinates is emphasized throughout training activities.

Service to the customer denotes a willingness to extend oneself above and beyond the call of duty, a concept which is readily extrapolated to military service. An example displayed on WalMart's corporate webpage describes the outstanding efforts of a Wal-Mart pharmacist who learned that one of his regular patients, a diabetic, had accidentally dropped her insulin down a drainage hole. He knew that she was at risk for a medical emergency, and he went in to the pharmacy early on a Sunday morning, outside of store hours, to renew her prescription so that she was able to receive her medication and stay on her treatment schedule. The underlying ethos is one of service before self, a concept which also transfers readily to a military environment.

The third tenet, "strive for excellence" may seem quite self-explanatory, but perhaps its most useful application in a military environment is in relation to team-building. Distaining mediocrity or even average or passable efforts, a department in WalMart that strives for excellence is certain to achieve the stated objective, i.e. increased sales, timely decision making and a high standard of customer service. Striving for excellence in a military environment is a very valuable concept in terms of encouraging soldiers to work together within a section, platoon, company, or regiment and to achieve the highest competency possible in training towards battlefield task standards.

It can readily be seen from this modest comparison of a fairly typical corporate employer that the skill sets and mental attitudes that are fostered in a corporate environment such as WalMart can be readily transferred to a military environment. Reservists who are entering the military world thus carry with them a strong foundation for soldiering that has been fostered by the philosophy taught to them by their civilian employers in the corporate world.

MILITARY CULTURE

Soldiers have extensive mission specific work-up training prior to deployment. Indoctrination, socialization, education and incorporation into the military team must occur in order to accomplish mission objectives. Reserve soldiers may not benefit entirely from this training as they can be preoccupied due to concerns with civilian employment, such as loss of benefits for themselves and their families, missed promotion opportunities or loss of commissions or other perks.

Families of Regular Force soldiers usually have the supports from the base and other military families to draw on. The Reserve force soldier has none of these benefits as they can be from isolated regiments with little or no access or awareness. Their hometown communities may be unfamiliar with the military and therefore may or may not be supportive of their military activities. Reserve service may be viewed as an economic or management liability, or may be simply inconvenient to the corporate plan. Therefore, significant strategies must be in place to ensure that Reserve soldiers have sufficient supports to enable reservists to focus on military training throughout all phases of deployment.

SUPPORT FOR THE RESERVE SOLDIER

Corporate human resources are very aware that care of the employee today will result in human resource capability for tomorrow. They are also aware that a team of health care professionals must work in unison in order to provide the necessary environment to promote wellness in employees. Care must be individualized yet must also be coordinated and team delivered to enable positive outcomes. Each member of the health care team, as well as the employee themselves must have input into care plans in order to achieve success. Evidence based treatment modalities encompassing individual, domestic and global perspectives must be mobilized to support the challenges that face our reserve force.

In the past, military professional health care workers, chaplains, nurses, and psychologists have worked independently to the limits of their practice and have not shared information in a timely manner to facilitate individual structured recovery. Respecting and combining knowledge is not only fiscally responsible but is also morally responsible. Sharing of knowledge enables quick resolution and competent support for soldiers who need post-deployment support. This is especially important for isolated reservists scattered across Canada who may not have access to military assistance and may subsequently utilize civilian or corporate resources. Initiating or recognizing the need for assistance may be from family, corporate or reserve units themselves.

Soldiers are often unaware of their "change" since deployment, thus are unable or unwilling to seek assistance in order make a full recovery. Health care teams work within a confidential environment sharing only to the limits of their oaths and duty with the command structure. Reserve command personnel must have some awareness of situations in order to provide optimal support and prevent a potential negative post-deployment cascade thus ensuring future reserve capability.

Health care professionals must share knowledge in order to have a complete assessment of strengths and challenges of the soldier and his or her family prior to deployment to ensure an adequate baseline before deployment. This includes not only a social and medical assessment, but also an employment history and responsibilities. This includes an understanding of the community environment that has shaped the soldier, and in particular some understanding of employer perspective and expectations. Civilian employment stressors can become potential combat stressors. Appreciating these difficulties and in turn understanding the soldier on a deeper level will enable the development and creation of rapport and will assist in building a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Adequate support for reservists includes an understanding and appreciation of the soldier's family system and stressors that may be present in that environment. A member of the reserve unit that is frequently overlooked is the unit chaplain. The presence of reserve chaplain can be useful in terms of reducing pre and post deployment stress for soldiers and their families. Most chaplains have a relationship of trust with the soldiers they serve, and are often perceived as a "safe" individual to talk to confidentially if the soldier is experiencing mental, social, or spiritual distress. Chaplains can serve as essential members of the integrated health care team for soldiers, especially if they possess specialized skills in clinical pastoral care, psychology, or social work. It is commonplace for chaplains to enter ordained ministry as a second or third career, and many have professional training in closely related professions that can be utilized in provision of care and support for reservists.

Reserve Force chaplains are uniquely positioned to provide support to the families of deployed soldiers. Most reservist chaplains do not deploy on peacekeeping operations simply because it is too difficult, if not impossible, to obtain permission from their ecclesiastical superior to leave parish responsibilities for six

months to a year.   They are thus able to provide rear party support to parents, spouses, and children of deployed reservists. Caring chaplains are in a position to provide emotional support to families of reservists as they adjust to the stress of surviving and raising children without one parent figure.

Family life for reserve soldiers is often compromised as a result of the stressors of regular training, which often regularly takes place on weekends and evenings. Family time for religious worship, sports, recreation, and household management tasks may be in short supply even before the deployment begins. Coping with problems such as discipline of children and management of household finances can also provoke a stress response for both the soldier and the spouse, which can have a negative impact on peacekeeping or combat operations. Soldiers who are stressed about family matters may experience impaired judgment. Sleep deprivation as a result of worry or anxiety about family or personal matters may impact decision-making ability under pressure.   This phenomenon has the potential to negatively affect not only the soldier, but the personal safety of other members of his or her section may be jeopardized as a result of the results of unresolved stress and its effects on sleep and cognitive function. (Fals-Stewart, 2005).

Research has shown that the soldiers (and their families) who suffer the most stress are female, serve in a high combat area, and have a lower rank. (Hammelman, 1995).   Direct communication between the Reserve chaplain who is supporting the spouse and family and the Regular Force chaplain who is supporting the soldier may be helpful, and indeed necessary, in order to reduce family stress for all concerned so that it does not have a detrimental effect on combat readiness.

CONCLUSION

Reservists are an important resource for the Canadian Forces.   Knowing their needs and appreciating the assets that they bring with them as a result of their civilian employment philosophies can enable leadership to integrate them readily within in the Regular Force for deployment. Understanding the learning style of the millennial soldier will assist in facilitating an easier transition for this soldier into the military world, and aid retention as a Reservist.   An appreciation of co-existing stressors between the corporate system and the military system will aid in post-deployment support planning and retention for future deployments. It is clear, given the information in this discussion paper that more research needs to be done to further understand the psycho/social needs of the millennial soldier.

REFERENCES

Debard, R. (2004). Millennials Coming to College. *New Directions for Student Services, 106*(Summer), 33-43.

Dobreva-Martinova, T., Villeneuve, M., Strickland, L., & Matheson, K. (2006). Occupational Role Stress in the Canadian Forces: Its Association With Individual and Organizational Well-Being. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science,* 0008400X, 20020401, 34-2,

Etzion, D., Eden, D. & Lapidot, Y (1998).Relief from Job Stress Burnout: Reserve Service as a Respite. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 00219010, 19980801, 83-4

Fals-Stewart, W. & Kelley, M. (2005). When Family Members Go To War-A Systemic Perspective on Harm and Healing: Comment on Kirkzwager, Bramsen, Adler, and van der Ploeg. *Journal of Family Psychology,* 19-2, 233-236

Gaudine, A. P., & Beaton, M. R. (2002). Employed to go against one's values: Nurse managers' account of ethical conflict with their organizations. *CJNR, 34*(2), 17-34.

Grossman, D. & Siddle, B (2000). The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill. Academic Press.

Hammelman, T. (1995). The Persian Gulf Conflict: The impact of stressors as perceived by army reservists. *Health & Social Work*, 03607283,19950501, 20-2

Roberts, L., Spreitzer, G., Dutton, J., Quinn, R., & Barker, E. (2005). How to play to your strengths. *Harvard Business Review, 83*(Jan).

Rokeach, M. (1968). *Beliefs, attitudes and values*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ustal, D. B. (1978). Values clarification in nursing: Application to practice. *American Journal of Nursing, 78*(2058).

Walker, D. L. (2002). Discovering the Millennial student. *The New About Teaching and Learning, 5*(2), 2.

WalMart Corporation: Corporate Ideals and Stories from the WorkPlace: www.walmart.com retrieved 27 Mar 2006